

## **Solid Waste Outreach Executive Summary**

### **July 27, 2009**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) implemented new solid waste programs with more recycling options and food / yard waste collection services to Seattle residents effective March 30, 2009. These new programs were developed as a result of the City of Seattle's effort in reaching the goal of 60-percent recycling of municipal solid waste (MSW) by the year 2012, and 70-percent by 2025. Currently, Seattle recycles 50-percent of its MSW, an improvement of nearly 2-percent compared to the year prior and 12-percent increase since 2003.



The 2005 American Community Survey reported Seattle had a population of 536,946 people of which 29-percent were made up of African American, Asian / Pacific Islander and Hispanic populations (156,650 people). Recent population studies showed that between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2007, 82,502 people moved to King County from other countries and by the year 2010, 20-percent of Seattle's population will be foreign born. These demographic changes along with SPU's commitment to the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) demonstrated the need to rethink the existing outreach strategies.

As a result of the changing demographics of Seattle, SPU directed resources, education and outreach specific to immigrant and refugee communities on the new solid waste programs. This would be accomplished through a partnership between SPU Solid Waste Contracts, SPU Communications, and SPU's Environmental Justice Network in Action (EJNA); a collaborative program that includes SPU staff, Community Based Organizations (CBO) and local agencies.

#### **2009 SPU AND EJNA SOLID WASTE OUTREACH STRATEGIES**

This year's outreach strategies included the utilization of several collaborative educational, outreach and evaluation methods including the following: a) community-based partnerships, b) trainings, c) field trips, d) community presentations, e) festivals, and f) community surveys.

##### EJNA CBO Partners

SPU and EJNA partnered with the following eight (8) CBOs:

- Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center (APIWFSC)
- Horn of Africa Services (HOAS)
- International District Housing Alliance (IDHA)
- Khmer Community of Seattle King County (KCSCK)
- Pasefika
- Somali Community Services of Seattle (SCSS)
- St. Mary's Parish and Food Bank
- Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS)



##### Trainings

SPU and EJNA trained CBO partners on solid waste changes through five (5) workshops, two (2) field trips and one (1) outreach festival prior to CBO outreach to their respective communities. SPU trainings were evaluated by each CBO partner and had an overall average rating of 3.53 for effectiveness (out of maximum of 4.00).

The format for the training workshops were interactive presentations which consisted of education on: 1) recycling, 2) food / yard waste, 3) garbage, 4) "other" collection services, 5) "beyond the curb" services and 6)



household hazardous waste. CBO partners were provided with a “presentation kit” which included:

- Display with samples of products to be sorted by participants
- “Where Does It Go” and “People Point” flyers, and other relevant flyers and brochures
- Kitchen counter food waste containers and food waste bags for door prizes



CBO partners were strongly encouraged to find a comfortable format most suitable to their presentation style and flow while maintaining relevancy and appropriateness for respective audiences.

#### Target Audiences and Locations

The target audiences were the immigrant and refugee communities. Audiences had to be Seattle residents only and **not** live in Seattle Housing Authority. Presentations were strategically held in locations with existing programs or services provided to the target community.

#### Outreach Goal and Targets

A goal was set for a total of 48 presentations (six per community partner) with at least 20 participants per presentation.

### **OUTREACH SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS**

The following is a summary of the key findings of this year’s outreach effort:

- Community partners have a strong network for recruitment and outreach. 64 presentations were completed with an average presentation size of 25 people.
- 1543 people attended the presentations
- Based on data collected about household size, 4629 will be reached.
- CBO partner’s provided interpretation skills necessary for outreach. 77.4% of presentations required interpretation.
- Racial breakdown of outreach:
  - API (54.6%)
  - African American / East African (30.7%)
  - Hispanic / Latino (9.1%)
  - Other (5.5%)
- Largest ethnic groups reached included Filipino, Somali, Cambodian, Mien, Chinese and Ethiopian.
- Most common neighborhoods where target audience lives include: Beacon Hill, Rainier Beach, White Center, Skyway, Georgetown, International District and Central District – largest population came from 98118 zip code (22.2%).
- Type of housing of audience was near-even: 44.8% were multi-family dwellers and 41.6% were single-family home dwellers. Seattle Housing Authority residents represented 4.2% of audience.
- EJNA CBO partners staffed the Solid Waste outreach booth at Green Fest and are scheduled to do outreach at 10 additional festivals this summer.



### **LESSONS LEARNED**

- Early involvement of CBO partners in the design and delivery of the Solid Waste Roll Out increased our ability to engage presentation participants.
- Trained presenter/interpreters, appropriate communication tools and translated materials are critical to the communication, education and outreach to immigrant and refugee communities.



- Most common questions and concerns raised focused on specific recyclable materials, costs, where to get food/compost bins and how to start food waste collection at apartment building.
- Having People Point flyer was a valuable resource for information on Low Income Rate Assistance (LIRA) and other assistance programs.
- Field trip to Cedar Grove Compost facility increased relevancy of training topics.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Although SPU's outreach efforts to immigrant and refugee communities have been successful, much more can be done to improve service to all SPU customers. Following is a list of recommendations:

- Provide public engagement training for SPU staff.
- Use Solid Waste Roll Out market research and "roll out" as a case study for culturally appropriate program design and public engagement and share with SPU staff.
- Identify consultants (for profit and non profit) that can assist with culturally appropriate market research, program design, delivery and evaluation of SPU program and services.
- Research and identify best practices for engaging diverse businesses and residents and share with SPU staff.
- Research and identify culturally appropriate communication tools and share with SPU staff
- Research, identify and test culturally appropriate assessment and evaluation tools.
- All SPU planning and evaluation should account for diverse populations and include appropriate resources and funding.